

Our member profile this fortnight is Tony Haven AM. He is the current Director of Lifesaving at South Narrabeen SLSC and his involvement in the movement stretches back to 1964, and includes an unbroken period of 51 years with our club. In January he was recognised on the Australian Honours List as a Member of the Order of Australia, he believes the award is more about his family and mentors than any of his own achievements.

He has held various positions at a club level including President, Deputy President, Club Captain, Secretary and Treasurer. In addition to this he held the position of SNB Branch President from 2002 to 2007 and was the President to SLS NSW from 2008 to 2016.



*Tony is pictured above at South Narrabeen beach
(When we had a beach!)*

When did you join South Narrabeen SLSC and why?

I joined South Narrabeen SLSC in 1964 and got my Bronze in March 1965. It took a whole summer to train for your Bronze in those days; the training was the same as today's R&R competition you see at carnivals.

It was only natural that I joined South Narrabeen as I had been living next door to Howard "Spike" Jones all my life. Living next door at the time I joined was Robert "Dunlop" Ferguson, Richard "Rucko" Rutledge, David "Monkey" James and Spencer Hemi, who had just come over from New Zealand.

Spencer took me down to South Narrabeen and joined me up on the long weekend in October; in those days there was a "run up the hill" (Mactier Street) to open the season.

What are the key lessons that you've learnt from your time in South Narrabeen SLSC?

When I joined when I was 16 I did not realise what surf clubs did was for the community. The lesson I have learnt, is it important that we as community members give a little time back to our local community.

What's it like being on the Club Committee?

In today times the committee members carry an enormous responsibility, there is a great deal of legislation around incorporated associations, work health and safety, etc. Your committee is responsible for managing this. As a senior member of the committee I try to mentor the younger members so they understand where to find the information and how to manage situations.

You've been a member at South Narrabeen SLSC for over 50 years, how have things changed?

I am now entering my 52nd season and when I look back on when I started patrolling you wore a patrol cap, had a reel, line and belt on patrol and that was it. No tubes, boards, IRB, uniforms, Oxy-Viva - the list goes on...

How are preparations for the 2016-2017 season going?

While the patrolling numbers have dropped off a bit this season those that have returned are extremely enthusiastic. We have a Bronze squad of 12 training, four boat crews on the water, an ARTC course running and the Nipper families have increased so the club is in good hands.

What are your goals within Surf Life Saving?

I'm at that time in my surf club career I want to put back into South Narrabeen supporting the club and committee.

What has been your best memory as a surf lifesaver?

My best memory is when South Narrabeen SLSC won the Sydney Northern Beaches Most Outstanding Club of the Year in 2000 and Karen McElligott was named the Sydney Northern Beaches Lifesaver of the Year.

Who is someone you admire in the Surf Life Saving movement and why?

The person I most admire in Surf Life Saving is Chica O'Reilly. Chica has been with South Narrabeen since 1947 through the good times and the tough times and carries great passion for our club and surf life saving.

Anything else you would like to add...

It has given me a great deal of pride that my family is part of South Narrabeen. We as a family have provided over 100 seasons of patrols at South Narrabeen.

Our family is now entering an era where my granddaughter, Ruby, has joined Nippers - the 4th generation of the Haven family at South Narrabeen SLSC.